MEMORIALS

OF THE LATE

REV. J. BENNETT, D. D.

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MEMORIALS

OF THE LATE

REV. JAMES BENNETT, D.D.

COMPRISING

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH,

THE

FUNERAL ORATION BY THE REV. J. JEFFERSON,

AND THE

FUNERAL SERMON BY THE REV. S. Mc ALL.

"For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord."
ACTS xi. 24.

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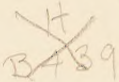

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

The Biographical Sketch prefixed to this publication was prepared for and read at the Funeral Service, in Falcon Square Chapel. It is now printed with but little alteration, and without an attempt to make it, in any respect, a complete Sketch of Dr. Bennett's life and character, because a hope is entertained that a more extended Memoir may eventually be published.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH,

ETC.

DR. BENNETT was born in London, on the 22nd of May, 1774. His mother he scarcely knew, she having died when he was very young. She was, it is said, a woman of superior mind. His father was nominally a member of the Established Church, and, to use his son's words, "always maintained the character of an upright and Christian man. He was too conscientious to worship where the Gospel was not preached, and as this was not the case at his parish church, he usually attended one of Lady Huntingdon's chapels." He committed his son's education to a schoolmaster of the neighbourhood, of some celebrity in his day, whose name was Plough. Here James Bennett, besides receiving the ordinary elements of an English education, was professedly taught the rudiments of Latin and French. But although, in Mr. Plough's estimation, his pupil did him great credit, Dr. Bennett himself always spoke of the instruction he there received as of very little value.

On leaving school, he was sent to business with a man who proved so capricious and tyrannical a master, that the connexion was of short duration. Eventually the youth went of his own accord to Bath, hoping to find

employment of some kind there. He lodged with some good people, whose family were some of them Moravians, and others Methodists. Here it was that God met with him; and from this point his subsequent history might be gathered from his own diary.

But Dr. Bennett's public character, and, to a great extent, even his private life, are so well known, that it is scarcely necessary, for the present purpose, to recall the more prominent facts connected with his history. During his lifetime, however, those only who were most intimately connected with him by domestic ties, could obtain even glimpses of his innermost life; although most persons who could rightly appreciate his unblemished Christian character and long career of distinguished usefulness, must have felt convinced that his outer life was the reflex of an inner life watched with no common care, and nourished by no ordinary amount of divine grace. Of this, abundant evidence is afforded by the private memoranda which he has left behind. The principal of these memoranda is the diary referred to, which he kept from the period of his conversion up to the close of his public ministry. And although this diary was kept strictly for his own spiritual welfare, and manifestly intended for no human eye but his own, there can be no impropriety in making such use of it as may serve to elucidate the sources of his success in the ministry of the gospel of Christ, and in maintaining through a long, varied, and active career, that Christian character which may well stimulate others to seek in like manner for grace to honour God, and to be faithful even unto death. The diary appears to have been used with great constancy to assist the writer in carefully reviewing his

course. This was done especially at certain fixed periods, of which the principal were the anniversaries of his conversion, and of his ordination. These, and two other days, were kept as days of private devotion, and generally of fasting. For, although it does not appear that he considered fasting to be enjoined in the New Testament, he believed that it was sanctioned and occasionally profitable.

Attached to the diary are several documents, which appear to have been used in connexion with it. These are—

1st. A list of dates, which begins thus:—"May 22nd, 1774, born; August 13th, 1792, born again; December 24th, 1792, preached my first sermon."

2nd. A list of questions addressed to his own soul, dated March, 1795.

3rd. A paper, headed: "For my own sanctification."

4th. His confession of faith, and the charge delivered to him by Dr. Bogue, at his Ordination.

The diary, as it now stands, begins with the following entries:—

"*Monday, August 13th*, 1792.—A day ever to be remembered by me. I was unexpectedly invited to drink tea with two pious people in the house, at which I was not well pleased, as their company and conversation made me gloomy. After tea, they went to prayer, which made it still more irksome to my carnal mind. But the Lord soon answered the prayers they offered for my conversion. One of the party, Mr. Shum, a German, who belonged to the Methodist society at Bath, on rising from prayer, was seated directly opposite the beautiful hills surrounding that city, which led him to say, in a

spirit which I would were always mine, 'How bounteous is the Lord in providing for his children, not only the necessaries, but the superfluities of life. How happy,' said he, 'is the man who, being made partaker of a living faith, can call the God who made all these things his own. All mankind are seeking happiness.' For the sake of saying something, I added: 'Some are seeking it in the right way and some in the wrong.' I had no sooner uttered the words, than I was struck with the conviction that I was seeking it in the wrong way. A solemn feeling, which I had before experienced, and constantly sought to throw off, now came over my mind, but attended with a secret inclination to cherish it. Each thought now increased it, so that towards the time when they were going to chapel, which was in a few hours, it became intense. My whole soul was now altered. The bias of my will was turned. My hopes and fears, my desires and conversation were all exercised on . . [a part of the MS. is here wanting.] . . . I immediately, on my return home, took to reading the scriptures, and to prayer, which in some measure calmed my spirit, and gave me a disposition to wait for God. I now found the beneficial effects of attending the means of grace, even in an unconverted state. Self-righteous hopes were precluded; for I understood the doctrine of justification by faith. I concluded, however, that the Lord would scourge me for my sins, by keeping me a short time waiting for peace of conscience. In this, however, He graciously disappointed me. After breakfast, I went to my business, believing that the way of duty was that in which I might expect mercy. My grief now began to be alleviated; my hope in divine mercy was strengthened;

and shortly after my load of guilt was entirely removed; my eyes were opened, and I found myself at the foot of the cross. Such was the effect of the deliverance, that I was overwhelmed, and was reminded of the words: 'Comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love.' 'Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib.' Throughout this and the two following days, I continued in a most ecstatic state. I lay down with a heart burning with redeeming love, and rose with the same delightful sensations. I could compare it to nothing but a gentle fire burning in my breast; indeed, it seemed to have that physical effect on my frame, that it seemed to me literally such a thing as a delightful glow kindled in my heart.

"I now wondered that I had not seen the superior happiness of the people of God; and recollected how serene and happy Mrs. Bowen looked. I thought I had only to relate what I had experienced; in order to induce others to become followers of the Lamb. I therefore made the experiment upon a young man that lived with me. But the sharp repulse I received, convinced me of my folly in supposing that the conversion of a sinner was a work so easily effected. He reminded me, how I had myself behaved, and though I grieved to find that others were so much like what I just now was: it delighted me to see what cause I had for gratitude to God, who had delivered me from this awful state. But joy was not always to be my portion.

"*Friday.*—The Lord hid His face from me—I was called from 'the banquetting-house' to the field of battle For I had foolishly supposed that I was to be always rejoicing. I now concluded that some great sin must

have been the cause of this depression. The opposition and reproach I met with from the world, joined with inward conflict, afforded the enemy a fine opportunity for temptation. But though my soul recoiled with horror at the temptation, to return to the drudgery of sin again; yet this imagination filled, haunted and distressed me. This, being my first, was a severe trial; but being founded, I trust, upon the Rock, the gates of hell could not prevail against me. The most beneficial effects were produced by this trial immediately after conversion.

"I had been much exercised with the idea of being called to preach the gospel. I was, with some difficulty, prevented from going out immediately into the highways and hedges, and calling sinners to repentance. Though, I trust, this was from the Lord, yet I am aware that Satan had much to do with it. I vainly imagined that mine was an extraordinary case, that there never was such a conversion as mine, and that I was to do wonders in the earth.

"My trial served, in some measure, to subdue my pride, and make me think my experience would be much like that of others. Yet my desire to preach the gospel continued; but, by the advice of a friend, I resisted the temptation to go out immediately."

His mind, however, continued to be much exercised by a desire to ascertain whether it were the will of God that he should devote himself to preaching the gospel, and towards the close of the same year (the year of his conversion), and when eighteen years of age, being still at Bath, there occurs the following entry:—

"On the last Sabbath I prayed earnestly that the Lord would show His will by opening a door in providence,

resolving, that, if so, I would follow implicitly wherever He should lead. This evening, I was unexpectedly called upon to fill a vacancy in a village, and consented. I selected 2 Corinth. v. verses 10, 11 (former part), 'For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.' My doubts and fears ran high; but I was aided in my meditations, and in speaking my heart and lips were opened; and as I received testimonies of the people's satisfaction, my mind was fully made up that I was following the path of duty."

The name of this village is not given, but he states elsewhere that he was soon occupied with village teaching and preaching, particularly in connection with Mr. Weston, a minister then settled in the vicinity of Bath, and one of Dr. Bogue's earliest students.

The next entry says, "*Dec. 30th.*—Preached at Upham, found the Divine assistance, and was cheered by the assurance of the people that they were profited."

About this time, those who had appointed Dr. Bogue to educate a few young men for the ministry, were on the look-out for suitable candidates; and Mr. Weston recommended Mr. Bennett. In reference to this, he said, some years ago, "I gladly seized the offer, and went to Gosport, where I became the favourite pupil of good Dr. Bogue, so that it used to be said, "Dr. Bogue's idol is Mr. Bennett."

It was on the 17th October, 1793, that he went to Gosport, where he entered with great ardour and diligence on those studies which were to fit him for the sacred duties he had undertaken. His memoir of Dr. Bogue, which is a beautiful piece of biography, evinces the love and deep respect he had for that great and

good man; and the value he put on his teaching, counsels, and friendship. The young student's intense love for learning and thirst for knowledge were such, that he made rapid advances in classical and biblical studies, whilst his conscientiousness and devoted piety won the affection and regard, not only of his tutor, but also of all Christians with whom he was brought in contact. From this time, he became, and continued through life, a devoted student, "intermeddling with all knowledge," but constantly occupied with village preaching, and never losing sight of the high and holy purpose to which he had devoted his life. Such was his diligence that his studies were continued to a late hour in the morning, when some opposite neighbours often observed his candle put out, as they were getting up. This practice he afterwards strongly condemned, found it injurious, abandoned, and took to early rising. This habit he maintained through the remainder of life: generally being in his study soon after five in the morning.

In 1795, he received an invitation from the church and congregation at Romsey; began his settled ministry there in February, 1796, and was ordained on the 5th April, 1797. He, from the first, acquired the warmest affection of his people, and the respect and esteem of the whole town and neighbourhood, whilst his success in his ministerial work may be gathered from the following document, headed,—

"A Review of the Church at Romsey, after I had been there fourteen years.*

* Dr. Bennett delighted to recall the noble manner in which his first charge responded to the demand for a new place of worship. In the sermon preached at Mr. James' Jubilee Service, he thus

"The place of worship is completely changed, as well as the people; more than thrice as large; it is as well filled as the old place was when first I knew it. The church is now five or six times as numerous as it was fourteen years ago. In one year, we received as many members within six, as the whole church consisted of at that time. Among all those admitted, the instances of improper conduct have been few: we have yet excommunicated but one, not for sinful conduct, but for dangerous error: and that sentence was so much blessed by Him who appointed this painful discipline, not for destruction but salvation, that the person renounced the error, was restored, and died in joys of believing. I know of no one whom we have not reason to conclude a Christian. Those who have died, have died in peace, and the end has crowned the whole of their profession. No divisions have been known in the church. My trials I have had; but I would not be without them, and with gratitude I acknowledge my comforts have outweighed them. I yet behold some of our former friends spared to us, and indulge the assured hope that the gospel is still making its way, and gathering others into the church. The numerous Sabbath school before me

refers to it:—"Fifty years ago I was desired to call upon my charge to build a larger place of worship. Having complied on the Lord's Day, the next morning we went about to seek subscriptions, and by Wednesday night had the promise of £1800! so that by Saturday, we had all that we thought needful; and the next day I preached a thanksgiving sermon. When we found the expense more than we expected, it was determined to have no debt, but to advance twenty-five per cent. on the original subscription, so that the giver of £100 added to it £25, and by that generous stroke all was happily settled."

I view with great delight, as a sight which could not have been enjoyed fourteen years ago. Two other schools in the country; two societies for the relief of the poor of each sex, and both of them connected with meetings for prayer and social religion. Sabbath morning prayer. One society, which originated among us for the relief of lying-in women. Two others formed by our friends — one benefit society for men, the other for women. Two societies for small contributions to the Missionary Society, besides our annual collections, and one Tract Society for giving away useful books. Annual collections for spreading the gospel in the country; and subscriptions towards the Academy at Gosport. Four or five places have been opened for the preaching of the gospel in villages."

But during his residence at Romsey, Dr. Bennett's labours were not confined to his own people. His influence was soon felt throughout the county, and even in the most distant parts of the kingdom. Like all Dr. Bogue's students, he became an active and enthusiastic supporter of the London Missionary Society, which had been established about the time he went to Gosport, and for which he preached the annual sermon at Surrey Chapel in 1804. He was present at the sailing of the ship *Duff* from Spithead in 1796. Associated with the excellent Robert Haldane, he travelled through a large part of Scotland, preaching on the Calton Hill and in other places, in the open air, and assisting in the foundation of the first Congregational Church in Aberdeen. He also visited Ireland for the purpose of promoting the cause of evangelical religion in that country, at a time when it was in a state of almost heathen darkness and

irreligion. Whilst at Romsey, he was honoured to introduce to the ministry, and subsequently to the pastorate at Birmingham, the Rev. J. A. James, who, on occasion of his Jubilee Services in 1855, publicly thanked him for all that he owed to him, and told his people that if he had been of any service to them, or to the church of God, he owed it in no small measure to Dr. Bennett.

His pen, too, was actively employed for the press during his residence in Hampshire. It was here that he published his "Sermon on the Religion of the Closet," "Memoirs of Risdon Darracott," and, in conjunction with Dr. Bogue, "The History of Dissenters." He was also one of the earliest and most constant writers for the *Eclectic Review* and the *Evangelical Magazine*. Before he left Romsey, he had made such advances in linguistic studies, more especially in Greek and Hebrew, and the allied Oriental languages, that his scholarship was even then considerable, and pointed him out as one peculiarly fitted for the office of tutor. Nor could he fail to be conscious himself that his abilities and indefatigable industry had fitted him for a different and more extended field of labour than was presented by Romsey. Accordingly, for several years before leaving Hampshire, he seems to have been impressed with a feeling that, if some larger field of usefulness presented itself, it would be his duty to enter on it.

Thus, under date of April 5th, 1813, he says:—

"Sixteen years ago I was ordained here; seventeen years I have laboured in this place! I came in weakness and in fear, and in much trembling. But, 'having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day.' And what shall I render unto the Lord for his kindness? My

entrance has not been in vain. The number of the Church has increased sevenfold. What a difference between our former and our present place of worship! We have had our trials, but how kindly have we been carried through them! What a measure of peace and affection! We have no parties. I am now the oldest minister of all the churches around. . . . But while I was reviewing the past, I could not help pleading with God for the future. I have of late been led to say to God, that if Thou will lead me into a scene of greater usefulness, I will, through Thy grace, regard it as a favour, laying me under greater obligations to devote myself more entirely to Thee. I pleaded with Him not to suffer me to take an improper step, nor to be deceived by a restless, discontented spirit, mistaken for a holy zeal."

"The day after I kept this day of devotion, I received an invitation to succeed Dr. Williams, as pastor and tutor, at Rotherham. I felt composed in consequence of its coming after I had received grace to consult God on my future prospects, and asked to be kept from an improper decision with regard either to going or staying. I felt on the Sabbath, in looking round upon my charge, as if I were looking upon a dying friend. I felt all my affection revive, as if I knew not before how much I loved them. My text for my anniversary was Acts xv. 7: 'You know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the Gospel, and believe.' It led me to speak in a way that awakened the people's minds to expect something. On *Monday* went to Gosport to consult Mr. Bogue. He warmly urges it. Mr. Griffin, too, who was much against my going to Birmingham, is now fully impressed

with the superior importance and propriety of this change."

Having been to Rotherham, and supplied there two Sabbaths, he again took counsel from Dr. Bogue, and other ministerial friends, and, as was his wont on similar occasions, put down on paper the various arguments for and against the change. He writes :—

"*June 7th.*—Kept a day of fasting and prayer for divine direction. I reviewed the case, the letters from both sides, and with my Bible in my hand, and in the prospect of death and judgment, on my knees, determined to remove."

August 15th, 1813, he preached his farewell sermons.

"After administering the Lord's Supper, I laid down my charge, amidst many tears. In the evening, preached on Acts xx. 26, 27, 'I take you to record this day,' &c.

August 22nd, 1813, Dr. Bennett entered on his labours at Rotherham, in the double capacity of theological tutor and pastor.

November 1st, he says :—"Received four members into the church. Lord, make it a token for good! First fruits of a glorious harvest! Through this month I have enjoyed more than ever I knew before in the same space of time. I find my study a paradise; my Saturday evenings' devotions are delicious to me, and, I hope, impressive to the students, with whom I always pray at that time. One morning, while reading Matthew Henry on Abraham's call from Ur, my views of the conduct of God towards me were so delightful, that I was obliged to go to prayer a second time, to bless God for His goodness to me through all my life, which now opened to my view, and filled me with wonder and delight. I

find, almost every week, fresh evidences of usefulness in my ministry; the face of the congregation is changed."

May 1st, 1814.—"I have enjoyed much of God to-day in my ministry, and preached to a full congregation. I also administered the Lord's Supper to an enlarged church; for I have now proposed fifty persons in about eight months.....But my mind has run much of late on the thought, that I am but preparing here for some more important sphere. I could not help pleading with God that He would make my way plain, and asking, if it were His will, that I might be made a blessing to my native city. Lord, make me willing to be, or do anything, to go or stay anywhere, by which Thou mightest be glorified."

"*January 6th*, 1815.—Set apart some time for secret prayer, at the opening of the new year. Returned from London, after spending five Sabbaths there, in much labour; the last four at Tabernacle and Tottenham, with considerable acceptance. Have felt much for my native city, and preached under such impressions a sermon to the London Association, which is to be printed."

Near the same time occurs the following entry:—

"I have reason to hope that I have hardly spent a Sabbath without being the means of calling home some soul, and much has been done for the truth."

It was during his pastorate at Rotherham that he preached the course of lectures on the History of Christ, which were afterwards published in three octavo volumes. This work he always reflected on with great pleasure, as he knew that it had been the means of making his Redeemer better known, and had been extensively blessed, to the edification of the Church of Christ. A great amount of labour and learned research was bestowed on it,

although he carefully excluded anything approaching to a parade of the learning which had been employed. His Memoirs of Dr. Bogue, and several of his detached sermons, were also published during his residence at Rotherham.

The influence which Dr. Bennett's force of character and intellectual acquirements exercised over the minds of his students could not fail to be considerable. But it is especially to his wisdom and fidelity as a friend and counsellor, and his holiness and devotedness as a Christian, that they bear their grateful and unanimous testimony. The continued studies demanded of him in preparation for his classes, and for the press, were, however, never allowed to interfere with his preparation for his pulpit; whilst his labours in the surrounding villages were abundant. Numerous village chapels were erected, as the result of those labours. By the humble colliers, and other poor of the vicinity, he was greatly beloved; and, to this day, there are not a few, both among the rich and the poor of Yorkshire, who bear testimony to the hallowed and lasting influence which he there exerted.

His health broke down amid these varied and arduous labours more than once. In 1821, he was laid aside by illness, attended by severe neuralgia of the face. But this, though a season of great suffering, entirely incapacitating him for mental exercise, was a time of remarkable spiritual enjoyment, during which he had vouchsafed to him such visitations as to lead him to say, when writing to a friend, that 'It was not lawful for man to describe what he had seen and experienced.' In 1827, his health again gave way, in connexion with what appeared a

trifling accident, but which was the principal cause that led to his acceptance of the call from the church in Silver Street.

There are several records of this illness also having been a time of much delight in God, and joyful anticipation of heaven. In his diary he states: "During my confinement I have had some strong visitations from my God. I have had a humbling review of the sins of my youth, my utter worthlessness and unprofitableness, and of the riches and sovereignty of that grace that must save me. I have also had affecting views of heaven, and been melted into tears of gladness at the prospect of that bliss. This, I hope, is weaning me more and more from this scene of things, and making me willing to depart at any hour to be with the Lord."

He removed to London in November, 1828, and flung himself with great zeal and devotedness into his new work. The church and congregation were rapidly and largely increased. Any special sermon or course, which he undertook, generally drew crowded congregations; and his popularity at this time, as a preacher, platform speaker, and writer for the press, was great. His diary, however, evidences that his humility of spirit, and sense of unworthiness and unprofitableness, were never greater than at this time. Thus, under date of March, 1830, he writes:—

"Preached at Claremont; but was much humbled by my want of watchfulness and spirituality, so that, on the following Sabbath, I preached on 'There is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mightest be feared,' and was still further humbled to see how my God is encouraging me and blessing me with so much increase, while I so vilely

requite His goodness. Lord, when shall I walk closely with Thee, and live in holy devotedness to thy glory? Lord, save me from provoking Thee to leave me to fall and dishonour Thy name, and be thrown aside as a broken vessel in which Thou hast no pleasure."

His principal writings for the press, after settling in London, were a volume of "Lectures on the Preaching of Christ;" [a supplement to the Lectures on the History of Christ;] his Congregational Lectures on "The Theology of the Early Christian Church;" "Justification as revealed in Scripture;" and "Lectures on the Acts of the Apostles." Of his smaller publications, the most important are the "Lectures on Infidelity," preached in connexion with his public discussion with Robert Taylor, a noisy, boasting infidel of that time.

It was after much prayerful consideration, that Dr. Bennett entered on this controversy, and notwithstanding the hesitation, as to its desirability, evinced by many even of his ministerial brethren. His acute, well-furnished mind, and his readiness of reply, peculiarly fitted him for such an undertaking; and his success was complete. The interest excited by this discussion throughout London was such, that vast crowds were attracted to the place of meeting; so that it became necessary to have the assistance of the police to maintain order. The force and acuteness of Dr. Bennett's replies silenced his adversaries, and excited the admiration of all; whilst the mode in which he conducted the discussion extorted from the infidels themselves an honourable testimony to his honesty, fairness, and courtesy. There is reason to believe, that the results of this controversy for good were both extensive and

lasting. To this day, city missionaries and others, who are called to meet the scepticism of the lower orders, state, that they have found nothing so adapted to the purpose for which they were intended as Dr. Bennett's Lectures on Infidelity. To the results of this effort, he frequently refers in his diary with devout gratitude to God.

Another public controversy, of a very different character, in which Dr. Bennett took a prominent part, and which excited a wide and deep interest in the Christian world, was on the subject of the Inspiration of the Song of Solomon. The distinguished writer, whose views at that time Dr. Bennett controverted, in the pages of the *Congregational Magazine*, was a man whose character as an eminent christian and profound scholar, Dr. Bennett greatly loved and admired, and whom nothing but a deep sense of solemn duty would have induced him to oppose. But it was ever characteristic of Dr. Bennett to be "valiant for the truth," and equally characteristic of his opponent, when convinced of an error, frankly to acknowledge it.

From May, 1830, till the appointment of Mr. Ellis, in 1832, Dr. Bennett, in conjunction with the Rev. H. Townley and the Rev. J. Clayton, discharged the duties of the Foreign Secretary to the London Missionary Society. He took a prominent part in the establishment and conduct of the Ecclesiastical Knowledge Society, and, indeed, in almost all the leading religious movements of the day. In all that related to the spiritual welfare of God's ancient people, he ever felt a deep interest, and was an early and warm supporter of the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among

the Jews. His sincere and unwavering attachment to the principles of Congregationalism, and his deep conviction of their scriptural character, were publicly recognised by his appointment as Chairman of the Congregational Board, in 1840.

The history of the church and congregation now assembling in Falcon Square, is recorded in a little volume published by Dr. B., at the request of the people, on their removing to the present place. It is therefore unnecessary to state the circumstances which led to their removal. It was a source of the highest gratification to Dr. Bennett, and called forth his repeated and grateful acknowledgments to God, that as he had commenced his ministry at Romsey, by the building of a new place of worship, and leaving it free from debt, he was permitted, when over seventy years of age, to close his pastoral labours in a similar manner. The church in Silver Street, when Dr. Bennett took the oversight, consisted of only sixty members. He raised it to between three and four hundred. He found it assembling in a dilapidated leasehold building, though sacred and venerable in his eyes, from its associations with the memory of the heavenly John Howe. He left it, in a new and commodious freehold building, without debt. How abundant and how varied were Dr. Bennett's labours in the present place, so long as health and strength were continued, need not be told to friends, in whose memories and affections he will long live.

The following extracts from the diary may serve to illustrate the tenour of his inner life, whilst thus actively exercising his public ministry in London :—

"*September 2nd*, 1849.—After a very dull Saturday, I rose from a delightful visitation. Somewhat between sleeping and waking I had a view of Christ in His infinity of being and wisdom, and specially meekness and benevolence, which deeply, though gently affected me, and made me somewhat thirst for my labours this day. In the morning preached on They 'killed the Prince of Life,' and was rather happy in showing the awfulness of sin, that it would kill God if it could; at the supper we had some life: Evening, on Christ's second coming, with life, but not with the deep devotion I could wish; though there were some signs of improving numbers. My soul was humbled to the dust by the sight of Christ's meekness, and gentleness, and compassion, and long-suffering, and forgiveness to me. I have recalled my omission with reference to August 13, 1792 [the date of his conversion]. Oh what do I owe to my Lord for looking upon me in my lost estate, for His mercy endureth for ever!"

"*April* 17, 1855.—Returned from St. John's Wood, where I intended to stay till Friday, but was too unwell. On returning, by night on my bed meditated on what my age suggested, that I was near my home. On a review of the past, what a scene of mercies! To be called by grace from a course of sin at eighteen, and not cast off, but to rear my monumental stone, Ebenezer, for my God hateth putting away.

"To be called into the ministry, to spend my life in the best of employments, to glorify Christ and benefit the church bought with His blood. To have been upheld in this pursuit in which many fall; and be made a blessing, so that each church has increased, and two buildings erected at the expense of £12,000; to have been enabled

by the press to serve my Lord and to contend publicly for the faith against infidels [R. Taylor], to have been prospered to the last in my charge after eighty; able to preach and have a co-pastor, peaceably settled and agreeable; to see my children provided for; to be provided for myself so as to be bound cheerfully to cast my care on Him who has cared for me; and now, notwithstanding all my guilt and unworthiness, to be able to look at death and fear no evil, but long for the great good of God's presence and image of Christ.

"*July* 8, 1855 (*Æt.* 81!) Morning, preached on Malachi iv. 2, being led to it by the happy change which has brought summer, but applied it to the soul, with some feeling; but, as usual, not as I intended. Evening, preached in the open air, in the Caledonian road, near the new Market (Ezek. xi. 19). I did this to join the general inclination to preaching out of doors, which I hope and pray the Lord will make a blessing; but my head was very noisy. I have consented to preach at Mr. James's jubilee. I am reminded of my call to wait and look for the coming of my Lord. Thanks to my Lord that I can rejoice in hope of beholding His face in righteousness, satisfied with His likeness.

"*November* 18*th*, 1860.—Awoke in the morning with sweet recollections of the past, seeing my first sermon was on Dec. 14th, 1792, in a village when I was about eighteen. Oh Lord what hast Thou wrought for me? Oh! for such a heart as becomes me. I asked grace to know and do what my Lord would have me till death.

"*November* 20*th*.—Filled with the expectation of death and consciousness of unworthiness, amounting almost to fear; but joyful hope prevailed, and desire to depart and

be with Christ, rather than what is prepared for the 28th, which I dread as flattery.

"*November 28th.*—Wednesday, appointed by a committee to present to me a memorial on my resignation of the pastoral office. I went, contrary to my original intention. The congregation was good, the place looked beautiful. Mr. Hall, my successor, read the document prepared by Mc All, educated under me at Rotherham, and now tutor at Hackney. After this, history of my charge for thirty-two years. Gave their present of £300. Called me forth to acknowledge the gift and give counsel. Closed with prayer. My illness made me unequal to the attempt; but I was compelled by love, and my Lord is overwhelming me by sovereign grace.

"*December*, 1860.—The last Lord's Supper of the year; but I was not able to go, and Mr. Hall took his new place in the church. My Lord's gracious word bears me up amid the trials of the flesh. Blessed be God!"

This is the last entry in the Diary, begun in 1792. He appears to have considered that his course was run: and having finished his public life, he resigned himself patiently to wait for his Lord's summons to depart and enter on the services of the sanctuary above.

Last Illness and Death.—Shortly before his last illness, towards the close of 1862, Dr. Bennett appears to have been favoured with some of those pre-libations of heaven, with which God had, from time to time, indulged his honoured servant, and which He now again afforded, preparatory to his removal hence. For, at this time, he informed one of his children he had been favoured with such delightful visitations from his

Heavenly Father, as could not be described, but from which he inferred that he could not have long to remain upon earth.

The character of his illness was very unfavourable to much communication, consisting, as it did, of great and increasing bodily and mental feebleness, attended often with much wandering and disturbance of mind, and which finally issued in days and nights of restlessness and delirium, very distressing to witness. His delirium, however, always partook more or less of the prevailing tone of his mind; and towards the end, became inexpressibly touching from its assuming the form of a fancied absence from home, and desire to return; so that for some hours preceding his death, he was continually entreating to "be taken home," and asking if they were not coming to take him "home." During the intervals of calm, he was feeble and unable to express himself in more than a few words; but it was evident that his mind was invariably peaceful, and possessed of his usual abiding confidence in God. Nor did he ever admit that he was the subject of any pain, though of much weariness and discomfort. When he spoke, it was generally of the blessedness of having believed on the Son of God, and especially of enjoying that blessedness at an early age, "for that," said he, "alters the whole aspect of life, and changes the character of all the future." Thus, on one occasion, on answering the morning inquiry of one of his sons, "How he felt?" after acknowledging his declining strength, he added, with his wonted energy, "But I have believed on the Son of God, and I expect everlasting life." As his son was leaving him, on another occasion, he observed, in a similar energetic

manner, "If any one supposes that I am now trusting in any degree to my own righteousness, you may tell them that they are very much mistaken." On the Sabbath evening but one preceding his death, he said to the attendants at his bedside, "Those of you who are going to a place of worship, give the preacher a text, 'Flee from the wrath to come.' Oh, the blessedness to have believed on the Son of God to eternal life! My precious Saviour! what a wretch am I!"

During a great part of his life, his devotional reading of the Scriptures was usually in the Hebrew Bible in the morning, in the Syriac Testament in the middle of the day, and in the Greek Testament at night. But for some time before his death, he had confined himself almost entirely to the Greek Testament, and latterly his study even of the New Testament had been limited to the Gospel and other writings of the Apostle John. These had been presented to him by a friend during the previous summer, in a very portable form, and in a good type, having the Greek on one side and the English on the other. This little volume gave him the utmost pleasure, and was regularly asked for by him long after he had ceased to be able to read. Towards dusk, one evening, his son observing this book lying on the bed, remarked, "Why, you cannot see to read now." To this he replied, "What I am reading requires spiritual, rather than physical light," and then quoted, in Greek, the first words of the Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word." On being asked which he now preferred, the Greek or the English, he replied, "Oh, the Greek, because you know that when you meet with a difficulty,

there you have the *authority*." He repeatedly spoke of the Gospel of John as of singular importance and value.

His time was almost entirely passed in secret communings with his own spirit and with God; and throughout his whole illness, the enemy of souls appears never to have been allowed to disturb his peace and joy. He, however, occasionally quoted detached texts of Scripture, sometimes commenting on them. Among others, he quoted the first verse of the 91st Psalm, "He that dwelleth in the *secret* place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." This he expounded as expressing the value put upon secret religion, and noticed as remarkable, that the Psalm which begins with secret religion, ends with "long life" and "salvation." "It gave him," he said, "great pleasure to remember that the first sermon he ever published was on 'secret religion.'" The sermon referred to was entitled, "The Religion of the Closet," and is known to have been extensively blessed. Of this he had published and distributed many editions. One of his last observations evinced the high value he put on prayer; when, on being wished "Good night," he replied, "It will be a good night, if it is a night of prayer."

On several occasions he referred to the Apostle Paul's desire to depart, and to be with Christ, as being "far better," but seemed to feel that he was called, as the final test of his obedience, to wait patiently his Heavenly Father's time. On one occasion, when asked, "Are you quite ready to go home?" he replied, with characteristic caution and humility, "What degree of preparation may be necessary for that, I know not; but this I know full well, my own imperfections."

The delirious restlessness of the two nights preceding the day of his death mercifully ceased on the morning of that day, and he lay for some hours perfectly tranquil and apparently unconscious of the presence of those around him. So quietly did his blessed spirit quit its worn-out earthly tabernacle, that the moment when he ceased to breathe would scarcely have been known, but for a bright, sudden smile which gathered on his lips. May we not believe that this was the smile of delighted and adoring gratitude, called forth by the vision of the gracious Saviour, in whom was all his trust, whom to serve had been his greatest joy on earth, and whom to see he always held would constitute the highest bliss of heaven? Are we not warranted in believing, that at that moment, though deaf to all earthly sounds, he heard the glad welcome, "Well done, good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"?

Dr. Bennett having died on the 4th of December, 1862, it was arranged that the funeral should take place on Thursday, December 11th, at Abney Park Cemetery.

At noon of that day, the Funeral Procession left the house of the deceased in Gibson Square, Islington. Besides his own family, the funeral was attended by the Rev. J. Sidney Hall and the deacons of Falcon Square Chapel, accompanied by the Rev. Thos. James: a deputation from the Congregational Union, consisting of the Rev. S. Martin (chairman), and the Revds. George Smith and R. Ashton, secretaries, and W.

Nathan, Esq.: a deputation from the London Missionary Society, consisting of the Rev. R. Robinson (deputy chairman), and the Rev. Dr. Tidman and the Rev. E. Prout (secretaries), and the Rev. E. Mannering. These were followed by several carriages, containing members of the Church and Congregation of Falcon Square Chapel.

On arriving at Abney Chapel, Stoke Newington, the procession was met by a numerous assembly, comprising a large number of the members of the Falcon Square congregation. Among the various ministers present, there were noticed—Professor the Rev. Dr. Hoppus, the Rev. John Robinson, Secretary of the London City Mission: the Rev. S. McAll, Principal of the Hackney Theological Seminary; the Rev. B. B. Haigh, Principal of Bramham College, (all of whom were formerly students under Dr. Bennett, at Rotherham): the Revds. T. Binney, W. Owen, C. F. Vardy, J. Pulsford, Thos. Aveling, A. Hampson, O. Dobson, and Dr. Hewlett.

The service was conducted by the Rev. Dr. Tidman, who, after the singing of the hymn,

> "Hear what the voice from heaven proclaims
> For all the pious dead,"

read the 90th Psalm, and part of 1 Corinth. xv., and offered prayer.

The Rev. J. Jefferson, the Minister of the Chapel, and one of the earliest of Dr. Bennett's students at Rotherham College, then delivered the Funeral Oration. The service at the grave was conducted by the Rev. Thos. James, one of the oldest of Dr. Bennett's surviving friends, and a member of the Church at Romsey during his pastorate.

On the following Sabbath morning, the Rev. S. McAll

preached the Funeral Sermon at Falcon Square Chapel to a large congregation, of whom almost every one was clad in deep mourning. The pulpit and galleries were hung with black cloth, and it was evident that the utmost anxiety was felt to manifest in every way the love and deep respect entertained by the people for their late venerated pastor. In the evening, the solemn event was improved by the Rev. J. Sidney Hall, Dr. Bennett's successor.

At Masborough Chapel, Rotherham, a Funeral Sermon was preached by the Rev. Isaac Vaughan, and the chapel was hung with black. And at Romsey, a Funeral Sermon was preached by the Rev. W. Crosbie, M.A.; and Special Services were held, at which it was resolved to erect a Monumental Tablet, in commemoration of Dr. Bennett's first pastorate there.

FUNERAL ORATION,

DELIVERED BY THE

REV. J. JEFFERSON,

Of Abney Chapel, Stoke Newington.

FUNERAL ORATION

BY THE

REV. JOHN JEFFERSON.

"HOW awful is this place! Surely the Lord is in this place; this is none other but the House of God, and this is the gate of heaven." Not more solemn to the ancient patriarch, nor yet more blessed, was that spot on which stood the mystic ladder, where the angels of God were seen ascending and descending, and where the sovereign grace of a long-neglected God arrested the waywardness of Jacob, convinced him of his sinfulness, and brought him to his feet, in humble penitence and self-surrender, saying, "If thou wilt perform the word which thou hast spoken, thou, O Lord, shalt be my God." To us, this morning, the heaven is opened as it was to him; the upward pathway still streams with the light which the triumphal entry of our father and our friend so recently shed upon it; the angelic messengers who bore his spirit to the skies, still rejoice over him as an illustrious trophy of redeeming power and love; and a voice may even now be heard from that "excellent glory," speaking to each of us, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Multitudes

have already gathered round him to greet him as the instrument of their personal salvation, and multitudes more on account of what they have heard and known of that which God wrought by him on the earth; but he, with loud acclaim, and, as if regardless of the human welcomes, joins the glorified throng in singing, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever!" And could his voice speak to us—that voice to which we have so often listened with delight, as he unveiled "the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven," while he was yet with us—we should hear him say, with special reference to this morning's service, "'Not I, but the grace of God which was with me'; 'Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world;' 'Look unto Him and be ye saved.'"

But though thus forbidden to utter words of eulogy, or think the thoughts of human praise, it is permitted of us, to magnify the grace of God in him; to weep where "Jesus wept," at the grave of him whom Jesus loved; and, lifting up our souls to the eternal throne, to cry with holy admiration and grateful esteem, "My Father, my Father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof; would that a double portion of thy spirit were upon me!" Well are we aware, indeed, that, whilst among us, he was compassed with the ordinary infirmities of our fallen and as yet but partially renewed nature; that he had his own peculiar besetments, and had to struggle hard for the position which he has won. But there are few to whom the Divine instruction could more suitably point, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace." It is not my province this morning

to portray his character or to sketch his life; this is the task assigned to another and later of his students, the Rev. Samuel Mc All; but a few brief sentences in passing I shall be forgiven in uttering.

Endowed from his birth with a vigorous constitution and an energetic mind, rendering him capable of enduring a large amount of labour; called by Divine grace in his nineteenth year, under circumstances which rendered the event a date to be looked back to, and an epoch to reckon from, and which gave to his subsequent life much of that decision by which it was marked; devoted, almost from the day of his conversion, to the service of God in the Gospel of His Son; working with indomitable zeal to acquire the attainments desirable for that high and holy office; taking his first pastoral charge at Romsey, some sixty-five years ago, and never ceasing to be the hard student through the long period of his public life; and gifted, besides, by an eloquence which was peculiarly his own, he soon became, as he so long continued, the attractive and popular preacher of the Gospel of God. Living near, very near, to the "Father of spirits," and drawing the truth from its pure fountain—the written Word—there was an unction about his ministry, which never failed to interest and to bless. "Holding fast the form of sound words," and never "shunning to declare the whole counsel of God," he "divided" to saint and to sinner "their portion in due season." Along with a sparkling imagination, which gave great variety, and a sprightliness of manner—I know not how else to call it—which arrested attention, there was a depth of thought and a reverence of feeling, which showed him to be a man "full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." And the result

corresponded. "Much people were added to the Lord." Seldom, indeed, did he preach, at least in the meridian of his life, without some known saving result. In him was the Divine word strikingly verified, "Him that honoureth me I will honour."

In his social life he was an affectionate husband—he told me his grief when his wife died—and a firm but tender father, ruling his household in the fear of God. Even at home, however, his spiritual life was seen rather than heard—indeed, there always appeared to me to be a holy, jealous reserve as to the inner workings of his soul. The outward showing was that of an undisturbed peace, and joy, and hope; and I believe, with scarcely an exception, the inner life corresponded. My personal knowledge of him was chiefly gained while I was a student at Rotherham, to which place he removed in 1813, as the president of that institution; and, during the forty-three years which have transpired since I left that spot, I have been continually discovering that I owe more to him than at the time I was at all aware of. To this hour, I am sensible that the whole man left an impression upon me which has not even now exhausted its power. As a tutor he was supremely anxious about the things which are of chief importance in the Christian ministry. An adequate acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, in the languages in which they were written, and a sound theology, were the two things in which he himself excelled, and in which he was concerned to see us excel also. His knowledge of general literature was far beyond what at first sight appeared, and his acquaintance with Christian literature, even from the fathers downward, very considerable. His theology was of the good old school. There was no

negativism about it—no cloudiness—no "uncertain sound." Owen and Howe, Charnock and Bates, Ridgley, and Baxter, seemed to be his favourites among English divines; the elder Turretin and Pictet among those of the Continent. But he bowed to no authority save that which was inspired. If his theology were to be characterised by a single term, the word *Pauline* would best define it; if it had a type in modern times, that type was probably Jonathan Edwards. Thoroughly Calvinistic in his doctrinal views, he was at the same time fully persuaded that the Gospel is a legislative authority, and that men are personally responsible according to it. I never yet met with a man who was less troubled about the difficulty of reconciling the necessity of Divine grace to render man obedient to the Gospel, with a full admission of his conscious free agency in reference to it. He saw both as undeniable facts; he dealt with them accordingly—content that the hidden things of God should belong to Him who claims them as His own. His writings, however, are the best exposition of His theology; and were I to select from among these what would show his true position as a divine, it would be his volume on "Justification as revealed in Scripture," written as late as the year 1840, when he was himself approaching seventy years of age, "against the Council of Trent and Mr. Newman's Lectures?" and a sermon delivered at Wakefield in the year 1815, entitled "The Influences of the Holy Spirit explained and defended." Throughout the period of his tutorship he ever sought to improve himself, that he might be more extensively useful to those around him. Perhaps we who were his students owed as much to his

casual hints and pithy remarks thrown in by the way as the occasion suggested, bearing upon points of personal, social, and public life, as we did even to his valuable courses of lectures. In the later years of his presidency, there was fuller, freer, and more frequent intercourse with the students than existed in the beginning.

When the doctor came to London, in 1828, to take the pastoral oversight of the church in Silver-street, afterwards removed to Falcon-square, and once under the pastorate of John Howe, it was under the deep conviction of the paramount claims of London on the ministers and churches of Great Britain; and, during the thirty-two years which followed, he lived and laboured under this conviction. His staunch Nonconformity—his full conviction of the Scriptural claims of Congregationalism—his earnest advocacy of religious liberty—his prominent place as a leader in the earlier movements connected with the Anti-State-Church Agitation—his devoted attachment to the London Missionary Society, and his concern for its growing prosperity—the ready help which he gave, as opportunity served, to the cause of British and universal evangelization—his benevolent disposition and his Christian liberality—are all too well known to need reference here.

To the venerable age of eighty-six, he was honoured thus to live and thus to labour. Two years of suffering retirement were, by the great Master whom he served, deemed needful to "perfect that which concerned him." The trial was borne with the patient faith for which one would have looked. If sometimes he would exclaim, "How long, Lord?" he would immediately add, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change

come." And now at length in his eighty-ninth year, having "served his generation according to the will of God," he has fallen asleep, calmly trusting in that Saviour whom he had so long known and obeyed. In him have been illustrated the words of the Psalmist—"The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; to show that the Lord is upright; He is my Rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him." But now "the cedar has fallen;" "howl, fir-tree." Thy days may be prolonged, but "there is an appointed time to man upon the earth," and "there is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit." "Prepare to meet thy God." "Watch and pray, seeing thou knowest not at what hour the Lord doth come."

He has entered into rest.—The death of the Christian is emphatically spoken of as a sleep, and his future state as a rest. Wearied, exhausted, worn out, the body is laid in the quiet grave, to rest from its labours till the morning of the resurrection. The spirit is with Christ. Absence from the body is presence with the Lord. There is no interval. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," this great change. The earthly house left—the heavenly house is entered. The disembodied spirit is "clothed upon with its house which is from heaven," that "mortality might be swallowed up of life." Nor is there any unconsciousness: but from the very moment of separation, quickened life—life at rest; but at rest as in contrast with the conflicts and struggles of earth, and in the exercise of highest vigour and

noblest activity. The repose is that which the understanding finds in clearer vision and satisfying knowledge—which the will finds in entire conformity to the will of God—which the memory finds in sanctified recollections of the way in which God has led us—which the affections find in divine fellowship and perfect security—which the conscience finds in sinless character and the testimony of divine approval—that which the activities of the soul find in "serving God day and night in His Temple," not only without weariness, but with ever-increasing power and zeal. The repose is that of the Christian warrior who has "fought the good fight," and obtained the victory—the repose of the Christian racer who has "finished his course," and received his crown. It is the repose of holy peace, where there is no disturbing influence from without or from within—of unwavering faith as to all the promises of the everlasting future—of immortal hope, "looking for, and hasting unto, the coming of the day of God," when "the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and the living shall be changed." The repose is rest *with* Christ where He is—rest *such* as that into which Christ entered when he had "finished the work which the Father gave him to do"—rest *in* Christ, whose immortal glory is the earnest and pledge of everlasting security to all "those who sleep in him"—the earnest and pledge of their complete redemption in that day when "He shall change these bodies of our humiliation, and fashion them like unto His own body of glory, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto himself."

But it is in vain to try to describe the "rest which remaineth for the people of God," and into which our honoured father and friend has entered—the keeping of

an eternal Sabbath "where God is all in all." The Holy Spirit seems to have searched out every figure, and, in the Scriptures, exhausted all the resources of nature to convey to us some definite idea of what it is; but still we must die to comprehend it. Contrast, as yet, is our most impressive teacher. We know enough to fire our zeal, to stimulate our diligence, to rebuke our sinfulness, to animate our hope, to sustain our spirits to the end, so that we may thankfully rejoice and sing :—

"Sin, my worst enemy before,
Shall vex my eyes and ears no more,
My inward foes shall all be slain,
Nor Satan break my peace again.

Then shall I see, and hear, and know,
All I desired or wish'd below;
And every power find sweet employ,
In that eternal world of joy."

Thus is he blessed, whose absence from us we this day mourn. Thus has God exalted and glorified him; nor is there one of all those who gather around the throne above who more fully owns his obligations to the grace that set him free, or more humbly casts his crown at His feet from whom he received it.

We must not, however, quite forget, that, "as one star differeth from another star in glory," so the degrees of piety and fidelity, activity and usefulness in the kingdom of our Lord on earth, shall receive a corresponding reward in heaven. All is the fruit of rich mercy, and every inhabitant of the celestial city has the "fulness of joy" of which he is capable; but the man who, through the period of a lengthened life, has been ever advancing in

divine knowledge and divine conformity, and has honourably occupied the successive positions in which Providence has placed him, naturally obtains the higher glory, as he is susceptible of the more enlarged happiness. "They that be wise shall shine as the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." An example is before us to-day of one to whom "five talents" were entrusted, who by trading made them other five, and who is now the "ruler over ten cities." Thus saith the Lord, "Well done, good and faithful servant." "Go thy way till the end be, for thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."

Christian people, gathered here this morning, whilst we thus with words of gracious truth "comfort one another," it behoves us to look seriously and anxiously at the practical use which we ought to make of this opportunity. What is our character—what our standing—what our preparation for the final summons? It is not for us to dream of years yet to come, moving sluggishly on in the divine ways — coming short ever not only of that which is due from us to God, to the Church, and to the world; but short even of our own holy purposes and resolves, and leaving that for the dying chamber, for which it may give us no opportunity. An example is before us of one who worked while it was day, and who worked all the day—of one whose private walk with God was eminently close, and who meditated in His word day and night—of one, whose Christian character and profession were to a large extent worthy of the divine calling—one who "set the Lord always before him," and who, therefore, laboured so diligently and so successfully, being "full of hope

through the power of the Holy Ghost." To copy the example, to attain the character, to imbibe the spirit, is to prepare ourselves to receive the reward. Let us not be slothful, but give all diligence "to make our calling and election sure," for "blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing."

Members of his church and attendants upon his ministry, yours was no common privilege,—yours no common responsibility. Whatever else he was, the pulpit was his forte, and his true home. You must meet him again. Let him not be "a swift witness" against any of you in that day. Give yourselves now unto God if you have not done it, and "cleave unto Him with full purpose of heart" even unto the end.

Brethren in the ministry—"who among us is that faithful and wise steward" to whom the great Master at His coming will address a similar welcome to that which he has received—upon whom He will bestow a like reward? To some of us the charge comes anew this morning: "Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received of the Lord, that thou fulfil it." Is not the admonition needed by all? Yea, have we not all need, ministers and people, to lie low in the dust before God at this time? Is there not a solemn call to confess our sins, to adore the long-suffering of our God, and to seek those abundant supplies of the Spirit of all grace which He is prepared to bestow? The eminence as a Christian, and the success as a minister, which Dr. Bennett attained, were both due to that sovereign grace. We, by the same grace, may become faithful to our trust, and stand in our lot at the end of the days.

My respected friends, the members of his family, great

indeed is your consolation at this hour. Praise and thanksgiving on his behalf, whose loss you mourn, are largely due from you. You have known him as none besides have known him. Your reverence and love have been, and are, worthy of yourselves, but not beyond his claims. I trust you are walking in his steps—that his God is your God. Still more closely imitate his example. Follow him as he followed Christ, remembering ever the testimony that he has left you of the blessedness of those whose God is the Lord—a testimony rendered specially valuable by its extraordinary length, its exalted experience, and its unwavering character. Seek to be the worthy representatives of such a father, so shall your reunion with him at another day be holy and happy. Looking down from his seat above through the heavens which so recently opened to receive him, he says to each one of you, "Come up hither."

We go now to the grave, there to deposit these sacred relics to mingle with their kindred dust till the Lord shall come. "The Lord grant unto us, every one, that we may find mercy of the Lord in that day." Amen.

FUNERAL SERMON

PREACHED AT

FALCON SQUARE CHAPEL, LONDON,

December 14th, 1862,

BY THE

REV. SAMUEL McALL,

Principal of the Hackney Theological Seminary.

N.B.—The following Sermon was delivered in a somewhat *condensed* form, to allow time for reading the Biographical Sketch, which, with some slight alterations, forms part of the present volume. The circumstance is mentioned to account for some difference between the Discourse, as here given, and the shorter but very accurate report in *The Christian World*.

FUNERAL SERMON

BY THE

REV. SAMUEL Mc ALL.

His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant.—MATT. XXV. 21.

DEATH is always solemn. It gives a kind of importance to the individual over whom it passes, and something of awfulness to the scene in which it occurs. Life itself is a solemn thing; and so it must ever be to die. The disappearance for ever of a human being, though himself all but unknown, and dying in the obscurest spot, is not to be reckoned a trivial and insignificant event. There are, however, *some* departures from this life which cannot but excite general notice. They are, indeed, as Aaron's dying on Mount Hor, in sight of all Israel.

A minister's death bears something of this character. We readily allow that all labour is honourable, and that the most ordinary duties may acquire a moral dignity from the spirit in which they are discharged. That spirit may be superior to the employ itself, as sometimes the vocation is superior to the aim and temper of him who is invested with it. But, after all, special solemnity belongs to the death of a Christian minister. Human priesthoods have, indeed, ceased; but faithful pastors are

compared in the New Testament to stars held in the right hand of Christ. His true ministers are "clothed with salvation" more fully, and in a higher sense, than were the sons of Aaron; and when they die, an office of pre-eminent sacredness comes to a close. The precursors of the event are not the laying aside of common things, but of duties which have brought the individual "to stand before the Lord, and to minister unto Him." It is a solemn hour when it may be said of such an one, "Thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away."

When the event is drawing nigh, we follow the disabled or afflicted minister to his retirement, with more than common sympathy. We picture one who has poured consolation into many a troubled heart, requiring now the gentlest offices, the kindest words, of love. We think of that voice which was heard rising full and loud in the sanctuary, and which made sinners tremble while it bade the penitent rejoice, now finding expression in solitary prayer. We think of one who has often ventured where the shafts of death fell thickest, now turning his face to the wall in some still and shaded chamber, because an arrow from the quiver of the last enemy hath fastened upon himself. Knowing how much our nature comes to require that, whatever it be, which has grown familiar to it, we do not wonder if the comparative solitude of the sick chamber should be almost oppressive to him who had learned to feel at home amidst excitement and publicity.

Beside this, it is the natural tendency of many diseases to depress the spirits. We do not wonder, then, if in such circumstances there be occasion to recall the

words addressed to the afflicted Job: "Behold thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands: Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees; but now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled." Here is one who has affirmed the possibility of displaying a cheerful confidence, a blessed resignation, in the hour of trial. How does it fare with himself? Is he resigned; nay, even cheerful? Well do we know that if this be the case, it is not as a minister, but simply as a Christian, that the afflicted one is looking to the Saviour. The power to say, "I know whom I have believed," must ever have been more to him than learning or popularity, or usefulness itself; but this fact stands out now with a prominence it did not possess before. A personal interest in the Gospel is not only "the principal thing," it is *everything*. With reverent attention, he peruses those portions of God's word which he has often read to the afflicted, and which he never saw in so much beauty as when they were thus used. The same Psalms which he has repeated beside one and another in suffering, now become the prayers of his own heart. He stays himself upon the promises of a faithful God. Happily, there is a presence which is felt by him when every other is withdrawn; there is a voice that is doubly welcome when others have died away. It is the presence, the voice, of Him who said: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

It is with a reverential, a specially affectionate, interest we contemplate the removal from amongst us not only

of a minister, but of one far advanced in age. The event makes us feel almost as those who have lost a father. Age itself demands respect; while yet its feebleness and its sorrows touch the heart almost as those of infancy itself. It is a divine precept—"Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man." In the case of the aged *believer*, there is added to every other claim, that of experience in the things of God. An "old disciple" presents religion under aspects which cannot come out to view in earlier life. Some who are but beginners may be slow to perceive this truth. Thus far they have done well; and they are confident as to what remains. But we must remember the admonition, "Let not him that girdeth on the harness boast himself as he that taketh it off." The aged believer has tested religion as others have not; he has adorned it as others have not; and yet he says, with an earnestness peculiar to himself, "Not I, but the grace of God that was with me." Here wisdom speaks with the greater authority because it is conjoined with lowliness; and when at last the old man gathers, as it were, his mantle around him, and descends into the dust, we look around, and say: "Our days are as a shadow, and there is none abiding."

> Princes, this clay must be your bed,
> In spite of all your towers;
> The tall, the wise, the reverend head
> Must lie as low as ours.

Perhaps every instance of mortality among the ministers of Christ makes some general impression, or awakens some leading sentiment, in the public mind. Sometimes the prevalent feeling is one of disappoint-

ment, approaching almost to consternation,—as when a SPENCER is suddenly called away at the outset of what promised to be a bright career, like the fairest morning followed by an early and total eclipse. Sometimes the feeling is one of loss, of perplexity, of deepest concern. We ask, Who is to fill the place of an ELY called hence in what we had deemed the mid-career of usefulness? And we exclaim: "His sun is gone down while it was yet day!" And sometimes, after a lengthened brightness, there is a mild protracted evening. The sun disappears slowly in the western sky, and, as it is bidding the earth farewell, lights up with tints of loveliness the fleecy clouds that catch its departing beams. When such an one as the late venerable Dr. BENNETT dies, the mind is filled less with the thought of human frailty, than with the remembrance of that long bright course which has come to a close. The prevalent feeling is one of admiration. Our first impulse is to utter the language of acclaim; and just as the humblest of all the spectators who witnessed the ancient combatant endure through the well-fought day, the racer hold out to the end and gain the crown, was permitted to join the shout of congratulation,—so we, not forgetting our inferiority, nay, more mindful of it than ever, are prompted to adopt language like this: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant!"

It should be noted that, in the parable before us, these words are put into the lips of one who represents the Son of Man. We may gather lessons appropriate to this occasion, by considering under what circumstances they are supposed to be spoken. We may then allowably express the grounds on which, as in the presence of the Lord, we ourselves utter this eulogium on that honoured

minister of Christ lately deceased; and this we do in the humble but firm belief, that it hath been pronounced by the Lord himself. And may the great Head of the Church help and accept us herein!

It can scarcely be necessary to say, by way of explanation, that while this parable bears on one great characteristic of our present state, it has been generally regarded as designed to suggest several subordinate and collateral truths. Respecting these, we shall make no mistake while keeping in view the great landmarks of the Christian faith.

I. We propose then to name a few lessons suggested by this parable—selecting those to which the present occasion gives special interest.

We name, FIRST, that, as Christians, we are serving an unseen Master. The Lord Jesus having blessed His people is parted from them, and a cloud hath received Him out of their sight. He may well be compared to one who hath gone into a far country. Far, indeed, is His dwelling-place from the turmoil of this chequered scene. He came to it; but it received Him not. It proved no home for Him; and so far as it depends on its own determination, it is not at present, nor will it ever be, a heritage for Him. Further than heaven from earth is Jesus from the thoughts of men. True, indeed, the world has appropriated to itself some of the externals of His kingdom. It has learned to say, "Lord, Lord!"—but where is obedience? Where is gratitude? Where is love? And where is the trust out of which all these would spring? The Christ of men's own imaginations receives a show of homage, we admit; but the true Christ hath not where to lay His head. Colder are men's hearts

to Jesus than the sepulchre in which He lay; harder than the rocks which rent, as if in sympathy with His dying pains. Mark the external, the formal, honours paid to His religion, and you might think that in men's judgment, the stars were not worthy to be a pavement for His feet; but behold their lives, and see whether they will have Him to reign over them. Mark their deaths; and see whether they have obeyed the call, "Look unto me, and be ye saved." It would not be thus, but that Christ, all glorious as He is, is despised and rejected of men; as if that manger at Bethlehem had been for Him a fitting cradle, that crucifixion between two malefactors, a fitting death. Such is the Saviour whom, having not seen, we love.

Secondly, this unseen Master is now invested with authority and dominion. This is intimated by the fact, that, when he who hath gone into a far country returns, it is to dispense honours and rewards, and to make His faithful servants "rulers over many things." The idea is taught more expressly in an almost parallel passage, to be found in the nineteenth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, the twelfth verse. There the person represented is a "nobleman who hath gone into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return;" like one of those princes who, in that day, repaired to Imperial Rome to have provinces and kingdoms put under their control. The nobleman comes back able, with a word, to make those who have been faithful to him rulers over five cities, or ten, at his pleasure. So it is with Him whom we serve, only that He hath a nobler investiture; for "God hath put *all* things under His feet." The conflict is past, the labour is ended, now. It is from a throne

girded round with angels, that He looketh down upon a world whose scorn was heaped upon Him, even while He bore its sins; a world whose cruelty He suffered, even while He averted from it a stroke far more terrible than its own. He sees it dark, restless, troubled, and doomed to remain such, till it shall look on Him whom it hath pierced and mourn. But He also sees here a people to whom heaven seems brighter, because He is there; and earth seems not irrecoverable, because He came to save the lost. These are His—His, whether they have worshipped in the upper room, the shaded forest, the gloomy catacomb, or the solemn temple. They have raised one strain of praise every-where, and at all times, "Thou art the King of glory, O Christ!" There is on earth a holy seed that are obeying Jesus as a King, confiding in Him as a King, rejoicing in Him as a King. They are acting upon the conviction that the world cannot be happy till Christ is honoured in it; and if we could look into their hearts we should perceive that they do not *wish* it to be happy till that consummation is attained. Nor is the consummation to be despaired of. Just as men's sins are so many pledges of judgment, so the slights cast on the Redeemer are so many assurances that He shall come again—a King to bless and to destroy—mild in His justice, awful and princely in His love.

THIRDLY, we may be reminded, that, in the absence of our Divine Master, a great and responsible charge is devolved upon His disciples. He hath "called His own servants, and delivered unto them His goods." Yes, in a sense He has delivered over His all—all that He hath here—to them. Applying these words not to ministers as a class, but to believers generally, we say that they are

charged with the upholding and the administration of their Lord's kingdom. Its solemn memorials have been entrusted to their hands. They are the living depositaries of its truth—with the charge not only to conserve, but to diffuse it. It is theirs not only to be learners, but teachers—not only followers, but representatives—not only subjects, but messengers and heralds. "As my Father hath sent me," saith the Lord, "so send I you." Let the church be inactive, and then whatever this world has that belongs to Christ will disappear from sight, like that talent which was folded in a napkin, and buried in the earth. On the other hand, if there be good and faithful stewardship, the five talents will grow to ten, the two will gain other two. What need then hath our Heavenly Master of devoted servants! There is admonition and solemnity in the thought. It may rouse us from our lethargy. It may stimulate us to seek a nobler than any worldly prize. Only as far as we are placing the interests of His kingdom above earthly things do we act suitably to our vocation. Nor can anything be more honourable. Our highest admiration is due not to the warrior, the statesman, the sage, but to the man who, having learnt a higher lesson, can say, with the great Apostle, "I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."

FOURTHLY, there are senses in which it may be said, "It is a long time ere the Lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them." We refer not now to that final account respecting which the scoffer asks, "Where is the promise of His coming?" but to that nearer audit when the hour of service for each shall severally close.

Life, in some of its aspects, is short, but in others how long, yea, how very long, it is! Measure it by the number of its thoughts, its desires, its imaginations, whether evil or good—measure it by its changing hopes and fears—measure it by its mercies or its sins, and then (if the expression may be allowed) this life appears like an eternity. My hearer! what volume would be large enough to contain the history of that sensitive heart of yours? Who could reckon up its plans, its hopes, its fears?—things once as real as the mind itself. Nor are the alternations of spiritual feeling few, or easy to recount. There has been time to become fervent for the Lord, and time to grow lukewarm and cold—time for zeal to manifest itself, and time for us to become, by insensible degrees, weary in well-doing—time for seasons of refreshing to be enjoyed, and for other and very different periods, when the things that remained were ready to die—time to ascend the mount, and to gaze on the distant glory, and then to come down to the common level, and be absorbed in ordinary things. How long hath it sometimes appeared to watch beside your Lord but one hour! If retribution immediately followed upon negligence, the slothful servant would not say, "My Lord delayeth His coming." If the performance immediately followed upon the promise, the foolish virgins would not give themselves over to a perilous and untimely sleep. If hope quickly ripened into fruition, the bride adorned for her husband would not look forth from her windows and ask, "Why are his chariot wheels so long in coming?"

Yes—and sometimes we see, as in that example which is now in view, the aged watchman slowly descending

from his tower—the aged shepherd going home at nightfall from his folded flock—the aged pilgrim waiting long at the river's brink, and thinking less of the way he has trodden than of the shining ones that are to beckon him across. The fervour of youth came long since, and it is over. Manly vigour reached its climax, and slowly declined. Then followed the almost stationary condition of a protracted old age. By slow degrees, publicity, in all its exciting forms, gave place to retirement. He who saw others grow grey beneath his teaching, now in quietude turns over the pages of that book which supplied him with so many promises for others, so many soul-inspiring texts. Texts it supplies no more, save for his own heart; and promises no more, save as they may be pleaded in solitary devotion. In such a case, it is truly "after a long time that the Lord of those servants cometh."

Fifthly, we may find comfort in the thought, that the results of work performed for Christ abide and remain. The talents grew by use, and the increase which they yielded may be brought forth together with the original deposit. "He that received five talents came and brought other five talents." Here is seen the great difference between labouring for ourselves, and labouring for God. Make self your aim, let the present life bound your views, and your work passes away. Grave the monumental brass as you will, it needs but to be fanned with the wing of Time, and the inscription fades. Write with a pen of iron in the rock, as if for ever, and the beating wave will efface the deepest stroke; but the mind of man is immortal, and so is the inscription written upon it by "the Spirit of the living God." He who has been instrumental in blessing the souls of men may

say: "My judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God." The seed he has scattered is incorruptible, and when the harvest comes, he shall gather fruit to eternal life. Yes, iniquities once covered with the precious blood of Christ are never remembered again. Penitents once accepted in Christ never come again into condemnation. Glory gained for God partakes of His own immortality. When the things of time perish and are forgotten, a common triumph, and a mutual blessedness, remain for the faithful teacher and his flock, "for we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus."

SIXTHLY, we are reminded by this parable of the reward that awaits, in diversified forms, the faithful servants of Christ. He who hath gone into a far country returns, not only invested with honour, but able to raise others to honour. His commendation is now the highest that can be received. He can make whomsoever he will to be "rulers over many things." He welcomes into his own joy—the joy of perfect success and of unquestioned dignity—the faithful steward. The servant and the master shall rejoice together.

There is much, no doubt, that is merely figurative and emblematic here; but how should it be otherwise, when those things are to be set forth which eye hath not seen, and the heart of man cannot perfectly conceive? Putting aside, however, the veil of imagery, we may imagine what would be the actual blessedness of a servant thus applauded, thus more than repaid. To such an one there would be no commendation like his master's. By such an one authority would be prized, not for selfish ends, but as an instrument of good. By such an one everything would

be valued in proportion as it identified him with his kind and approving Lord. Here, then, we are told that the common link which binds them together is a common joy. And all this is in harmony with the most distinct testimony of inspiration. We are, perhaps, repeating part of one of the very earliest of inspired hymns, when we quote the words of the Apostle: "It is a faithful saying, that if we be dead with Him we shall also live with Him; if we suffer we shall also reign with Him;" or, as we read elsewhere, "We shall also be glorified together."

Will there then be anything like this "Well done"? Yes, Christian. Your gracious Master may deign to say of you what you would not have said of yourself, and what you do not venture to anticipate from lips so pure as His. Surely His Spirit does not dwell in your soul, a living fount of grace, kindling holy desires, prompting to duty and to love, without some fruits being produced—some mental states on which the Judge of all shall look with complacency. Let us not, in order to prove the need of the Saviour's work *for* us, disparage the Spirit's work *in* us. Infinite purity is as quick to discern the faintest trace of good, as it is to detect the slightest evil. It opposes what is wrong; but it delights in whatever is congenial to itself. The holy though fruitless wish, the well-meant though utterly ineffectual attempt, does not escape it; and when, as sometimes happens, the wish is not wholly fruitless, nor the endeavour completely in vain, "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love." Oft when you felt nothing but self-reproach and bitter disappointment, He who saw what you had *meant* as clearly as what you had *accomplished*, may have said: "Thou didst well that it was in thine heart."

Arduous is the struggle, and distant seems the prize; but remember the promise is "to him that overcometh," and the reward is not less than this: "Thou shalt sit down with me upon my throne."

"Be thou ruler over many things." Tell us, it may be said, is there anything answering to this? Yes, there may be satisfaction, like that of one who should be raised from being a steward to being a prince,—one whose honours are a royal gift, and a reflection of the royal splendour. Here is greatness that will not elate. Here is distinction that will draw no envious eye. Here is a crown that does not fade.

Full of meaning, as well as beauty, is the expression, "The joy of thy Lord." That possession must be precious, whatsoever it be, that shall be shared with Him; and in this very circumstance we find a pledge that it will never satiate or cloy.

The felicity of the Lord, viewed as *His*, contains within itself the means of its own infinite replenishment; while considered as *ours*, it will have the interest that belongs to a boundless possibility of growth. 'Tis not so in the present world. It cannot be denied, that, though peace is sweet, yet *here* peace itself may be monotonous. Joy is desirable indeed; yet it is its very nature to destroy the relish without which it fails to give delight. Were we to remain what we now are, there would be something almost oppressive in the perpetual experience of bliss,—or rather in the constant possession of the *means* of bliss. But 'tis the *Saviour's* joy that we shall share. Our heaven shall be like His,—its ecstasy not exhausting; its effulgence not dazzling; its weight of glory not oppressive;—nor will eternity itself seem long.

Christian! soon shall you bear heaven better than now you can bear the thought of it; but surely something of its felicity would form part of your experience already if, imperfect as you are, you would believe that you are dear to Christ. Think not that he will begin to love you when you enter a world where love is universal. Your dangers, struggles, sorrows, move at least His pity, which is but a lower form of kindness. Your services are not wholly disregarded. While you are impatient of remaining imperfection, and rightly so, know that in spite of it Jesus loves you, and *that* for what you are, as well as for what you shall be. The vine-dresser prizes the new wine while it is yet in the unripe cluster. The potter values the clay while it is yet upon the wheel, and little resembling the shape to which it shall be formed. The refiner values the silver while it is yet mingled with the dross which the fire is to purge away. The father loves his child long before it has ceased, from very ignorance, to speak as a child and understand as a child. Tempted and wayworn Christian! let no struggles with indwelling sin make you insensible to the Bridegroom's words: "Since thou was precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee." Be your imperfections what they may, they shall cease ere long; and not even the painful remembrance of them shall remain to hinder your possessing, in its fulness, "the joy of your Lord."

II. I purpose to consider some special grounds, on which, as in the presence of the Great Master, this commendation may be pronounced on our departed friend. It is not, indeed, that our applause can be anything to

him. Truly, in this respect, his earthly state singularly resembled the better condition to which he aspired. No man was less dependent on human praise; and few, perhaps, have ever sought it less. He seemed to be ever jealous over himself, lest he should be drawn to seek from men, or should thoughtlessly give to man, that honour which belongeth to the Lord. With singular truth he might have said, like the great Apostle: "Neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor of men sought we glory."

The public has long since marked its sense of the great abilities with which Dr. Bennett was naturally endowed. His quick apprehension, his sound and discriminating judgment, his vigorous imagination, his mastery of language, have been honourably appreciated. It is, therefore, less my object to dwell on these various gifts, than to observe that the powers which might have tempted him to indolence were cultivated with the most exemplary care. It was part of his religion, that genius may arrogate to itself no superiority to ordinary laws. It was one of his maxims, that the greater the talents possessed, the less excuse is there for the want of application. If I refer to his varied acquisitions, it is not to hold up to admiration mere learning, but to point out, especially to the young, what may be accomplished by diligence, by economy of time, by a resolute determination, carried throughout a whole life, to have *no idle days*, (for that day is not idle in which our powers are recruiting themselves for more efficient labour). I wish to show, also, what may be accomplished by one who acted on the motto, *Bene orâsse est bene studuisse;* for our revered friend gave more time to prayer than would be thought

by some to be at all compatible with successful study, or a life of general activity. Let it be observed, also, in connexion with the same fact, that, if he adhered to a long-established and approved Theology, it was not from scantiness of mental furniture, narrowness of views, or the want of curiosity and research,—to which I will add, that as little was it owing to the want of an independent spirit, and (where truth was concerned) a fearless one. His was a true, a native, thirst for knowledge. He loved it for itself; he valued it for the great and holy purposes it may subserve. Self-indulgence, however palliated, needed no other rebuke than it received from his daily life. Ignorance he accounted a shame; sloth a sin. The consequence was, that starting in life with no high scholastic advantages, he soon outstripped in general learning not ordinary men only, but the majority of acknowledged scholars. Living much amongst the great spirits of the past, he was still singularly alive to the interests and the movements of his own day. There was no improvement in the arts, no discovery in modern science, and no branch even of polite literature, that did not seem to interest him. Seldom has a linguist shown the same attachment to philosophy; and still less frequently, perhaps, has an Oriental scholar been so much alive to the beauties of the British essayists and poets. More rarely still do men expect to find the powerful and successful preacher a close student, a patient thinker, a man of letters and research. While acquiring growing popularity in the pulpit, the late Dr. Bennett gained the position of a leading authority in the Hebrew tongue. He was sufficiently familiar with the Syriac to employ it in devotional reading; and with regard to the New Tes-

tament, it would perhaps have been difficult to say which was for many years the more familiar to him, the English or the Greek. He gave valuable instruction to the more advanced of his students in Arabic and Chaldee; and amongst modern languages, he was sufficiently master of the French to have been able to preach in that tongue. In regard to Biblical Antiquities and Church History, our friend held no mean place; while, in reference to systematic Theology, he was justly accounted a master in our Israel. Familiar to a large extent with the controversies of ancient and modern times, and, above all, ready in the use of the sacred text, he was able to enrich others from the stores of a well-furnished and well-disciplined mind. Not to mention his other publications, we may point to his Congregational Lecture on the "Theology of the Early Church," as an evidence of solid and extensive learning; to his work on "The Doctrine of Justification as revealed in Scripture," as a proof of discrimination as a theologian; to his "Lectures on the History of Jesus Christ," as giving only a fair example of what he was as a deservedly popular and very useful preacher; while his work on Infidelity will remain a monument of his combined dexterity and power as a controversialist.

Here, however, I need not enlarge; partly because I have been anticipated in the excellent Oration delivered on Thursday by one of the earliest of his Students; and partly because I trust that some permanent memorial of a life so exemplary, as a pattern to the younger ministry, may be given to the public.

It is not my purpose to offer at any length my own personal reminiscences of my honoured friend and tutor.

I may, perhaps, be permitted to say, that, when I first enjoyed his acquaintance, he was not only the president of a college, but the pastor of a large and influential congregation, having five village stations affiliated to the parent interest. His position was, in every respect, an honourable and most influential one. Eminent socially, as well as morally, he was looked up to as but few can hope to be. His discourses were most edifying to believers, while the appeals with which they abounded were such as the most hardened sinners found it difficult to resist. His mode of conducting church meetings was regarded by the students as a model for their imitation; and none who witnessed his administration of the Lord's Supper will forget how near, how solemn, was the Saviour's presence at such times. We recall him amidst his large and devout body of communicants on the Sabbath afternoon; we hear them sing together their sacramental hymn, led by his own voice; we see them slowly separating full of the solemnity and tenderness of the service, to meet again in their several villages or the neighbouring town of Rotherham, for evening worship, like men who had come from the upper room, and to whom Jesus had said, "Peace be unto you!" If, however, that impression was ever exceeded, it was while our good tutor conducted the devotions in the College Hall on the Saturday evening, when none could fail to discover that he was under an extraordinary influence, as if he came from the secret place of the Most High.

While he preached, the signs of strong emotion not unfrequently filled the place;—as when, on one occasion, after expostulating with the sinner, and seeming to give him up; nay, after bidding him go his dark and down-

ward way, with a loud and piercing voice, in tender and yearning agony of spirit he bade him again and again to "*come back*, for why would he die?" And when, on another occasion, being too weak to preach otherwise than sitting, he came to a part of his discourse in which he had to refer to the glory of heaven, and in lieu of describing it, confessed that he had not words to unfold the theme, but added, that "if they would ask him a hundred years from that time, he trusted he would have much to say about it."

What our venerable friend was in the pulpit, he was in the family; in the Lecture-room, and in the College Hall. Devotedness to Christ had so impressed its stamp upon him, that we may perhaps say he *lived* rather than that he *taught* it. His favourite lesson was the necessity of secret prayer: his own most cherished practice was the observance of that duty. Associated in the tutorship with a man of kindred spirit, a man as saintly, as diligent, as true,—the late Rev. Thomas Smith, M.A.,—he wielded a power over his students most stimulating to all, and especially welcome to those who were most capable of worthy aspirations. The joint influence of these devoted and honoured men had but one tendency—to make the aspirants to the ministry live as men that waited for their Lord.

Let me name it as a signal and gracious providence, that one who loved work so well, should have had, after his removal to London, another life-time, as it were, added to his long day of service. And there was cause of thankfulness in that appointment which connected the closing days of Dr. Bennett with this Christian Church. In one sense, he stood to it in the position of a second

founder. In another, he profited by the experience, and the long established character, of those whom he *found*, and of many whom he *left*, in its fellowship. As the Church which surrounded him at Masborough was kind, devout, and faithful, so was that which he found in Silver-street. Its officers and members knew his worth, and sustained him by their sympathy and their prayers. The fidelity and attachment of this Christian people, the usefulness with which God honoured him amongst them, formed a precious solace in the evening of his life.

Whether we think of our departed friend as marked by Christian consistency, by ministerial diligence, or by fidelity to the truth, we cannot refrain from applying to him this eulogy, "Well done!"

Let it not be imagined that a course so bright, one over which, there is reason to think, the breath of suspicion never passed, could be maintained without an amount of effort which nothing would justify but the prize of holiness, and nothing could have sustained but the grace of God. There was not a moment of religious peace but had its cost; not a feature of the great Master's character that he came to bear, but it indicated some new conquest over himself. Close scrutiny of the heart was added, in his case, to deep meditation in the word; fasting and humiliation were not seldom added to secret prayer. Oh! had he trifled with common duties, or with little sins; had he known a single prayerless day; had he in any one turning point of life preferred the praise of men to that of God, the pleasures of sense to the heavenly birthright, how soon would Satan have perceived his advantage, and how possible it is, that

the name we honour to-day might have become the jest and the scorn of fools. But, through many an evil day, he fought the good fight. With watchful care he put on, and kept girded closely round him, the whole armour of God; and having done all, he was enabled by grace to stand,—nor did the weapons of the spiritual warfare fall from his grasp till the signal came, "Well done! thou good and faithful servant!" Show us the person who is wanting in self-denial, the man whose common demeanour suggests the common, the half-apologetic remark, "he cannot deny himself,"—and we affirm that he will never reach for a single day the standard which Dr. Bennett maintained throughout his life.

The *ministerial devotedness* of our honoured friend calls for the same commendation. It is now seventy years since his first sermon was delivered; and during nearly the whole of that time, he "ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ." Churches which in succession increased and flourished under his care, attested his diligence. Activity, taking many directions, was the law of his life. He displayed it as the Christian, the philanthropist, the pastor, the author, the tutor. He enriched the religious literature of his country by many valuable writings, and still he lives and speaks amongst us, by some who were his pupils in the ministry, (a number fast lessening); and by many more who were his children in the faith. Conversion, a marked reality in his own case, he aimed to produce in others—travailing as in birth with souls till Christ was formed in them. Nor was all this in vain. He has seen rise to Christian honour the children's children of those whom he first led to Jesus; nor is it for us to say how many of his spiritual

offspring may have welcomed him to the world to which he first directed their steps, nor from how large a part of that blessed assembly may have come the accents of grateful recognition, mingling with the Master's voice, "Well done!"

Nor less does our friend seem to us to have merited this eulogium by that *fidelity to the truth*, which came to be expected so confidently from Dr. Bennett, that it would have been almost impossible to conceive of him without it. Rooted and grounded in the faith, he held by the word of God as a sure, an everlasting testimony. He felt it to be accompanied with the quickening power of the Holy Ghost; nor did it come to others, as it fell from his lips, "in word only." Sinners were aroused, and penitents were brought to the footstool of a pardoning God. His was no uncertain testimony. Salvation through the blood and righteousness of Christ he preached to the last—and would have preached at the stake. He courted not the applause that might have been gained by preaching "another gospel." Far from tampering with the truth, we believe that he would have invoked an anathema even upon an angel from heaven, if he attempted to displace, though only by a hair's-breadth, the corner-stone of the sinner's hopes.

The event which to-day fills our thoughts, may well remind us of our *growing responsibilities*. In the outset of life we feel ourselves in the hindmost ranks of a vast army, in which all the care belongs to others. Many (as we think) must be removed before it will be *our* turn to face the enemy. So also it is in the Christian life, and in the public career to which, in one form or the other, so many of us are called. While there are seniors in

our ranks, the care, the responsibility, seems wholly to belong to them. It is theirs to advance,—theirs to meet the foe,—theirs to watch, amidst possible danger, over the interests of truth and humanity. It is not to *us* that men will have recourse in difficulty; it is not on *our* opinion that they will act. Yea, if we are somewhat remiss—if our part in the great enterprise be unperformed—we comfort ourselves with the persuasion that there are those who will see that the *cause* does not suffer. But how differently do we feel when our seniors are one by one disappearing! Surprised by a process than which, in fact, nothing could be more gradual, we look around, and missing the old familiar countenances, we ask: "The fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live for ever?" Slowly do we realise the all but astounding truth, that the inevitable course of things has brought ourselves to the front, and that, however unworthily, we have to be leaders where so lately we held but a secondary rank. Ministers, who not long since classed themselves among the young, must suffer themselves to be told that it is to them men are beginning to look as the guardians of our orthodoxy, the advocates of our principles, the pioneers in the march of improvement, the directors in the great schemes of missionary effort. Deacons too, and senior members of churches, and heads of families, are called to remember that from them are expected now the counsels of experience, that to them the young are looking up as to the only living examples they can follow, just as they themselves looked up not long since to leaders of the host whose place is empty, and whose standard is passed into other hands. Is there a thoughtless hearer present who, by failing to

realize his position, provokes the censure: "Gray hairs are here and there upon him, and he knoweth it not?" Is there one here so watchful, so diligent, that he needs not resolve, if his sun is beginning to decline, that he will, with redoubled energy, live to purpose, and redeem the moments that are left?

Once more: this event may well impress us, because, in a minister's decease, come when it may, there is the *removal* of so much *instrumentality fitted to save souls.* Nothing brings the past so near to us as the stroke that for ever separates it from the present, with all its concerns. Often does it seem as if words that have been spoken come out into their fullest distinctness, when the lips that uttered them are closed to open no more. It will now appear but as yesterday, when some, whom it would not be easy to move and to affect now, sat beneath that voice with tears. Very recent will seem the time when it appeared as if, could that thrilling appeal have been urged home a little more, the heart must have yielded—could that melting, soul-subduing prayer have been continued but a little longer, salvation would have been won. But, sad to say, thoughtlessness returned, sin regained the mastery; and now where are tears? Where is the instrumentality that could call them forth? They may be wanted when they will not come! It is said, that in a great Revival in Scotland, a sinner convinced of his guilt, and grieving that his heart was yet so hard, cried aloud: "Oh! that I could but hear such an one" (naming a deceased minister) "again, for half-an-hour!" Well, there is another witness for Christ, and one who lingered among us long after most of his generation had fallen asleep, gone at last. Sinner! bestir thyself, or soon thy

day of grace will be gone, thy Saviour will be gone, and nothing will remain for thee but an everlasting separation from the just.

And now to this CONGREGATION I say: Forget not your responsibilities. Be thankful that you were associated with some of the best days, and the happiest labours, of this honoured servant of God. Strive to be to each other, and to the Lord, all that your deceased father in Christ prayed and longed that you might be. And may the blessing of God rest abundantly on your present respected Pastor, and his worthy colleagues in office, with the Church generally. So shall your fellowship constitute a worthy memorial of the latest efforts of one of the most faithful of God's ministers; and, what is far better, it shall give constant proofs that HE is among you who is the only undying and unchangeable "Shepherd of the sheep."

If to these remarks, I forbear to add more than a very few words to the FAMILY of our beloved and honoured friend, it is in the belief that the lessons of his life, sealed by a holy, happy death, will be far more impressive than anything the preacher could advance. May the name you bear be honoured in yourselves and in your children! May it be honoured as it can only be by devotedness to Christ, and by a faithful copying of those who "through faith and patience inherit the promises!" And may the love of a kinder heart than death can ever chill be yours in time and eternity!

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST BE WITH YOUR SPIRIT! AMEN.

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